



**AnimalKind**

BCSPCA Accredited

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## Dog Training Standards

REVISED JUNE 2020

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**BCSPCA**  
SPEAKING FOR ANIMALS

THE BRITISH COLUMBIA SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

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## Preface

To help more animals in the community, the BC SPCA and the University of British Columbia (UBC) Animal Welfare Program recognized the need to evaluate and promote animal-related businesses that are committed to good welfare practices within their industry. Through this research partnership, AnimalKind – the BC SPCA’s animal welfare accreditation and referral program – was created. AnimalKind businesses use science-based practices and share BC SPCA values. AnimalKind was developed with funding from the Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies and the Vancouver Foundation.

The BC SPCA is one of the largest animal welfare organizations of its kind in North America. Established in 1895 under the provincial *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act (PCA Act)*, the Society’s mandate is to protect and enhance the quality of life for domestic, farm and wild animals in British Columbia (BC). As a registered charity, the BC SPCA operates community animal centres, education and adoption facilities, veterinary and spay/neuter clinics, a wildlife rehabilitation centre, a provincial call centre, and a provincial office. In addition to province-wide programs for advocacy, government relations, humane education, and scientific research, Special Provincial Constables enforce the *PCA Act* and *Criminal Code of Canada* to fulfill the Society’s law enforcement functions.

## Introduction

### Why is the BC SPCA accrediting dog training businesses?

The BC SPCA values the important role that dog training professionals play in helping dogs learn and socialize, and helping guardians (i.e., owners) achieve their training goals and build positive relationships with their dogs. To promote humane, reward-based dog training practices, the BC SPCA has developed evidence-based standards that reflect animal welfare values.

To help our supporters and the public choose a dog trainer, the BC SPCA will be offering an AnimalKind accreditation program to dog training businesses in BC, and its own dog training services at a select number of its facilities. Through AnimalKind, the BC SPCA aims to connect more dog guardians with trainers who use humane training methods that are reward-based and evidence-based. Humane training refers to the training or caring for an animal without using pain, fear, physical or verbal intimidation techniques. Similarly, reward-based training refers to any training technique, tool or device that the dog does not perceive as physically or emotionally uncomfortable. Evidence-based training methods are methods that are informed by objective evidence, including data and peer-reviewed scientific literature. Throughout this document, please refer to Appendix 1 for these and other definitions.

We also envision that the AnimalKind community of dog training businesses will contribute to public education about the importance of humane training methods that are reward-based and evidence-based to improve the welfare of dogs in BC.

### How were the Standards developed?

Research and development of the AnimalKind Dog Training Standards (the “Standards”) was informed by: a scientific literature review of the effects of dog training methods on dog welfare and learning ability (performed for the BC SPCA by Dr. Joanna Makowska) <sup>1</sup>; peer-review by local and international animal behaviour and training experts; in-person discussions and written feedback from BC dog trainers; widely accepted ethical principles and animal behaviour and welfare science; existing dog training standards and position statements; and applicable laws of BC and Canada. These Standards also reflect the values of the BC SPCA as expressed in Position Statements (in particular, Position Statements on: Animal Training <sup>2</sup>, Dog Welfare <sup>3</sup>, Companion Animal Handling and Restraint <sup>4</sup>, and Companion Animal Confinement <sup>5</sup>).

The BC SPCA acknowledges that scientific knowledge is continually evolving, and that scientific evidence on some topics related to dog training is still lacking. These Standards are based on the evidence currently available and will be updated as new evidence comes to light. Where scientific evidence is not yet available, the values of the BC SPCA were used to guide Standards development.

### Which dogs do the Standards apply to?

The term “dog” refers to domestic dogs of all ages in the species *Canis familiaris*. The Standards apply to the training of all dogs, including pet dogs, shelter dogs, sport dogs and working dogs (e.g., assistance dogs, police dogs).

## What is dog training?

Dog training refers to actions undertaken to manage or modify a dog's behaviour at all ages, including activities aimed at socializing dogs, teaching dogs to perform desired behaviours and inhibit undesired behaviours, and preventing the development of problem behaviours.

Dog training also refers to teaching dog guardians how to humanely manage or modify their dog's behaviour, and teaching guardians about normal dog behaviour, dog communication and dog body language. Some examples include puppy classes, group classes, agility classes and one-on-one individualized lessons.

## Which businesses can be accredited?

The Standards apply to organizations or businesses that provide dog training services (i.e. "dog training businesses" or "training businesses"). Accreditation is given to dog training businesses, not to individual trainers. All trainers within a dog training business must meet the Standards for the business to be accredited. A dog training business may consist of one (sole proprietor) or more trainers.

The Standards are not intended for businesses whose mandate is to provide specialized services that go beyond dog training (e.g., members of the Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors (APBC) or Certified Applied Animal Behaviorists (CAAB) working under veterinary referral, or Diplomates of the American College of Veterinary Behavior (DACVB)). The BC SPCA does not currently accredit entities outside of BC.

## How does the accreditation process work?

Accreditation is voluntary, and initiated by the dog training business interested in becoming accredited.

To be eligible for accreditation, a dog training business must adhere to the Standards (which outline acceptable and prohibited actions) and the AnimalKind Accreditation Program Operations Manual (the "Operations Manual", which outlines the terms and conditions of accreditation as well as the complaints and appeals processes). In addition, AnimalKind accredited dog training businesses are expected to adhere to all Canadian federal, provincial and territory acts and regulations, and municipal bylaws related to animal cruelty, care and transportation.

Accreditation requires the training business to participate in an audit to establish that the Standards are met. Accreditation is renewed yearly and may involve an annual re-accreditation audit. As a BC SPCA non-profit initiative, AnimalKind aims to be sustainable by recovering a portion of operating costs through fees charged to the AnimalKind accredited businesses.

## AnimalKind Dog Training Standards

### Standard 1: Humane methods that are reward-based and evidence-based are used to train dogs

- 1.1. Training methods used and taught by trainers focus on rewarding dogs and positively reinforcing desired behaviours.
- 1.2. Training methods used and taught by trainers focus on removal of a reward, differential reinforcement of an incompatible behaviour, counterconditioning or desensitization and counterconditioning to extinguish undesired behaviours or change emotional states.
- 1.3. Training methods used and taught by trainers emphasize positive dog-human relationships to enhance communication.
- 1.4. Dog training businesses must have a written animal welfare policy and/or mission statement to communicate expectations to trainers and assistants regarding animal care and handling (see Appendix 2 for required elements of policy).
- 1.5. Trainers and assistants must demonstrate awareness of the business's animal welfare policy.

In the case of an emergency situation likely to result in harm or injury to a person or animal, trainers may use a quick intervention that does not otherwise conform to the Standards in order to ensure safety (e.g., grabbing a dog to stop an attack).

A number of scientific studies have assessed the effects of training dogs with reward-based methods versus aversive-based methods on dog welfare. Dogs observed by researchers during training were found to display more stress-related behaviours (e.g., lower posture, more lip licking) when trained with aversive-based methods compared to reward-based methods<sup>6,7</sup>. These stress-related behaviours persisted even after the dogs were responding reliably and the aversive stimulus was no longer used, suggesting that verbal cues themselves had become aversive. Studies like these suggest that the use of aversive-based methods can adversely affect dogs' welfare immediately and long-term.

Surveys of dog owners have shown that more frequent reported use of aversive-based methods, whether alone or in combination with reward-based methods, is associated with more frequent reporting of aggression and other problem behaviours, while more frequent reported use of reward-based methods alone is associated with less frequent reporting of aggression and other behaviour problems<sup>8-14</sup>. This relationship does not imply causality (i.e., it does not show whether using aversive-based methods leads to aggression and other behaviour problems, or whether the presence of aggression and other behaviour problems leads dog guardians to resort to using aversive-based methods). However, this relationship does imply that aversive-based techniques – as used by respondents of these surveys, who were not professionals – have not proven effective in eliminating problem behaviour. Indeed, results from surveys indicate that reward-based training is more effective than aversive-based training when used by non-professionals<sup>8,13,15</sup>. Training with the use of aversive-based methods by professional dog trainers may be as effective as training with the use of reward-based methods, but not without the potential for compromised welfare or the development of other problem behaviours<sup>16</sup>.

In addition, two recently published literature reviews analyzing the bulk of the scientific papers on the effects of aversive-based training methods in dogs have concluded that aversive training methods pose risks to dog welfare by jeopardizing physical and mental health of dogs <sup>17,18</sup>.

The BC SPCA acknowledges that no one scientific study is 'perfect'; however, taken together, results from 9 empirical studies, 10 survey-based studies and 2 review papers point towards the same conclusion: aversive-based methods have negative welfare consequences on dogs, and there is no evidence that these methods are any more effective than reward-based methods.

In 2016, the BC SPCA adopted a Position Statement on Animal Training <sup>2</sup> to advocate “for the use of force-free, humane training techniques utilizing science-based learning theories which foster trust and build positive human-animal relationships.” Similar positions advocating for the use of humane, reward-based and evidence-based methods have been adopted by other animal protection <sup>19–24</sup> and veterinary <sup>25–27</sup> organizations and associations for professional animal trainers <sup>28–31</sup> in Canada and worldwide.



**Standard 2: Training methods, devices or tools that cause pain, injury, anxiety, fear or distress to the dog are not used**

- 2.1. Use or teaching of any training method, device or tool that is designed to cause, or that causes, pain, injury, anxiety, fear or distress to the dog is prohibited.
- 2.2. Use of any method, device or tool that a particular dog has a consistent aversive reaction to is prohibited for that dog (even if the method, device or tool is not designed to be aversive).
- 2.3. Use, teaching, sale or advertising of the following aversive training methods, devices or tools is prohibited:

**Training methods**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• hitting, ‘bonking’, poking, punching, kneeing, kicking, pinching, jabbing, squeezing or biting any part of the dog’s body</li> <li>• pinning the dog on the ground (“alpha roll”)</li> <li>• forceful restraint (e.g., holding by the tail or feet, head lock)</li> <li>• holding the dog under water</li> <li>• asphyxiation, including hanging or helicoptering</li> <li>• choking with hands</li> <li>• rubbing the dog’s face in urine or feces</li> <li>• scruff shaking</li> <li>• throwing or pushing the dog</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• throwing anything at the dog to cause pain or fear</li> <li>• startling noise (e.g., coin tin)</li> <li>• forcing anything down a dog’s throat</li> <li>• food or water deprivation</li> <li>• physical confinement used to punish the dog</li> <li>• prolonged social isolation used to punish the dog</li> <li>• harsh verbal corrections</li> <li>• spray bottle</li> <li>• leash corrections (‘pop’)</li> <li>• cinching of thorax, abdomen, or prepuce with a leash (e.g., manually looping leash or ThunderLeash) or harness (e.g., LUPI Harness)</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

**Training devices and tools**

- electronic shock (aka static) collars (including remote activated, bark activated and boundary fences)
- prong (aka pinch) collars (including plastic and metal)
- choke chains
- slip collars and slip leashes
- anti-bark collars (any type)
- spray collars (e.g., scented spray, compressed air)
- muzzles that prevent panting or drinking

The training methods, devices and tools listed above are prohibited because they are likely to cause pain, fear, distress, physical injury or death, and may result in increased behavioural problems, including aggressive behaviour.

In the case of an emergency situation likely to result in harm or injury to a person or animal, trainers may use a quick intervention that does not otherwise conform to the Standards in order to ensure safety (e.g., grabbing a dog to stop an attack).

The list above is not exhaustive. Any method, device or tool that a particular dog has a consistent aversive reaction to is prohibited for that dog (even if the method, device or tool is not designed to be aversive). Where appropriate, trainers may use positive reinforcement and/or systematic desensitization and counterconditioning to build a positive association with a method, device or tool that is not designed to be aversive; for example, a leash or a head halter.

**Hanging and helicoptering:** There is at least one documented case of severe brain injury necessitating euthanasia following disciplinary ‘hanging’ of a dog by a choke chain <sup>32</sup>. Several animal organizations describe ‘hanging’ and ‘helicoptering’ as unacceptable training methods <sup>20,33,34</sup>.

**Forceful restraint:** Restraint used in training may be allowed only when done short-term by a trainer in the context of preparing a dog for its short-term use by a veterinarian or a groomer. Training should use systematic desensitization and counterconditioning.

**Electronic shock collars:** The use of electronic shock collars is illegal in Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Norway, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Wales, and in the states of New South Wales, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory in Australia. Legislative bans are currently being implemented in England and Scotland. The provincial *Regulation respecting the safety and welfare of cats and dogs* in Québec forbids collars that cause pain or injury; consequently, the law recommends against the use of shock in dog training. Shock collars not only cause pain <sup>16,35,36</sup>, but they also result in immediate <sup>16,35–37</sup> and long-term <sup>36,38</sup> negative emotional consequences in dogs (even when used by experienced trainers and according to manufacturers’ instructions). With regards to electronic fencing systems, the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) states that “some dogs become very agitated from the stimulus however minimal, and may become fearful of their environment” <sup>39</sup>. There is some documented evidence that dogs may cause injury to a person as a result of having received an electric shock from an electronic boundary fence system <sup>40</sup>.

There is no scientific evidence that training using a shock collar is more effective compared to training with reward-based methods. On the contrary, available evidence indicates that using a shock collar is less effective <sup>41</sup> or only as effective <sup>16</sup> as using a reward-based method. A number of Canadian and international animal protection <sup>20,23,24,42</sup> and veterinary <sup>25–27</sup> organizations and associations for professional animal trainers <sup>28–30</sup> have spoken out against the use of electronic shock collars in dog training. The American College of Veterinary Behaviorists (ACVB) advises veterinarians not to recommend to their clients trainers who use shock collars for basic obedience <sup>34</sup>. Recently, the European Society of Veterinary Clinical Ethology (ESVCE) has stated that they “position strongly against the use of e-collars in dog training, [...] and urge all European countries to take an interest and position in this welfare matter” <sup>43</sup>. This position was taken following a thorough literature review of the pros and cons of using electronic shock training devices in dogs <sup>44</sup>.

Electronic collars that are not capable of delivering shock but instead communicate with dogs using vibrations or sounds, if conditioned as a secondary positive reinforcer, are acceptable with the exception of use as anti-bark devices (discussed below). For example, vibration collars may be used to communicate with deaf dogs.

**Prong collars:** Prong collars are illegal in Austria, Denmark, Switzerland, New Zealand and in the state of Victoria in Australia; and they are not recommended in Québec per the provincial *Regulation respecting the*

*safety and welfare of cats and dogs.* Choke collars are illegal in Denmark and Switzerland. The use of prong or choke collars is associated with stress behaviours in dogs <sup>35,36</sup> and there is no evidence that they are associated with better training success compared to non-punishment-based collars <sup>45</sup>. The CVMA and the Canadian Advisory Council on National Shelter Standards strongly discourage the use of prong, choke and pinch collars in favour of more humane alternatives <sup>39,46</sup>. Many other animal organizations <sup>20,23,24,29,47</sup> have voiced their opposition to the use of prong collars and choke collars for dogs.

**Slip collars and slip leashes:** Slip collars and slip leashes are not allowed as a training tool (e.g., slip collar tightening used to train the dog not to pull on the leash). Slip leashes may be used as a short-term management tool. For routine movement of animals, the use of tools which do not constrict around the neck are encouraged, such as flat buckle collars, harnesses, and martingale collars (only if appropriately fitted to the circumference of the neck when tightened).

**Anti-bark collars:** Anti-bark collars that emit sounds, vibrations, scented spray or a hiss of cold air when dogs vocalize instill anxiety <sup>48</sup>; they may be effective in the moment, but they do not address the underlying cause of the behaviour. RSPCA Australia <sup>24</sup> and the Association of Pet Dog Trainers UK <sup>29</sup> are explicitly against the use of any collars that emit aversive scents or sounds, while RSPCA South Australia <sup>47</sup> and the Australian Veterinary Medical Association <sup>27</sup> denounce the use of citronella collars.

**Muzzles:** Muzzles that allow natural behaviours such as panting or drinking (e.g., basket muzzles) are strongly recommended. Use of more restrictive muzzles (e.g., nylon muzzles) as a training method to stop barking or chewing is not permitted. Restrictive muzzles may be allowed only when used short-term (i.e., a few minutes) by a trainer in the context of preparing a dog for its short-term use by a veterinarian or a groomer.

Any tools used with dogs must be properly fitted and allow dogs to move comfortably (e.g., harness).

**Standard 3: Business models align with a commitment to protect dog welfare**

- 3.1. Dog training businesses must identify a veterinary care provider that is accessible during training hours (including evenings) and is in good standing with the College of Veterinarians of British Columbia (CVBC) in case of emergency during a training session.
- 3.2. Dog training businesses, trainers or assistants must not have been convicted of an offence involving animal cruelty, and/or have not had animals seized pursuant to any federal or provincial legislation.
- 3.3. Concurrent operation of another dog training business not accredited by AnimalKind alongside the business intended for accreditation is prohibited (including branches and franchises).
- 3.4. Dog training businesses that offer home-based, board-and-train services (i.e., clients' dogs are boarded in a trainer's home and not in a separate facility) must:
  - a) obtain veterinarian contact, health information and feeding instructions for the boarded dog;
  - b) take reasonable precautions and actions to provide the boarded dog with a safe and comfortable living experience;
  - c) ensure the total number of dogs in their home (including trainer's own dogs) complies with local bylaws;
  - d) disclose in writing to the boarded dog's guardian, the health and vaccination status of any other dogs residing in the home during the boarded dog's visit.
- 3.5. Provision of other dog-related services (e.g., kennel-style boarding, grooming, daycare, shelter) or concurrent operation of another animal-related business (e.g., farm, wildlife control) is acceptable if the business:
  - a) is an AnimalKind accredited business; OR if AnimalKind accreditation is not available, meets industry standards relevant to the service or business, such as the CVMA *Code of Practice for Canadian Kennel Operations* <sup>49</sup>, the CVMA *Code of Practice for Canadian Cattery Operations* <sup>50</sup>, or the National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC) *Codes of Practice for the care and handling of farm animals* <sup>51</sup>;
  - b) aligns with the values of the BC SPCA as expressed in the Society's Position Statements <sup>52</sup>;
  - c) ensures employees have not been convicted of an offence involving animal cruelty, and/or have not had animals seized pursuant to any other provincial legislation;
  - d) is accessible for viewing by AnimalKind auditors during the accreditation process for the dog training business.
- 3.6. Referrals to, or partnerships with, other dog training businesses should preferentially be made to or with AnimalKind accredited businesses. When referring to, or partnering with, a dog training business not accredited by AnimalKind, trainers must ensure that the business uses only humane training methods and does not use training methods, devices or tools that are prohibited by AnimalKind Standard 2.

**Standard 4: Ethical and legal business practices are followed**

- 4.1. Liability insurance must be held by the dog training business.
- 4.2. A receipt for services rendered must be provided to each client.
- 4.3. Dog training businesses, trainers and assistants must operate in compliance with municipal or regional bylaws.
- 4.4. Training businesses must operate in compliance with WorkSafe BC regulations, where applicable.
- 4.5. Dog training businesses must establish, maintain and retain for 3 years, records for each dog that describe:
  - a) name(s) of client(s) and legal guardian(s), if different from client(s);
  - b) name of dog(s);
  - c) breed, age, sex and spay/neuter status;
  - d) any prior behavioural issues, including aggressive behaviour, and the context in which it occurred;
  - e) relevant health history (e.g., allergies, history of tracheal collapse, sensitive body part).
- 4.6. Dog training businesses must establish, maintain and retain for 3 years, records for each training session that describe:
  - a) date and location of training;
  - b) dog(s) in attendance;
  - c) training activities, including the training methods, devices or tools used and any homework given to clients;
  - d) any exceptions to training (e.g., dog bit someone, dog reacted poorly to a training tool).

Elements in Standard 4.5 may be reported by the guardian (i.e., veterinary records are not required). Standard class curriculum or lesson plan may be referred to or attached to training records for each session. For example, the standard curriculum for week 3 of puppy class may be referred to or attached to the training records for week 3 of this class. The progress of individual dogs in a group class does not need to be tracked, but trainers must record the occurrence of any exceptions to progress, such as a dog bite or poor reaction to a training method, device or tool. Homework given to clients should also be referred to or attached to the records.

**Standard 5: Trainers are qualified in humane training that is reward-based and evidence-based**

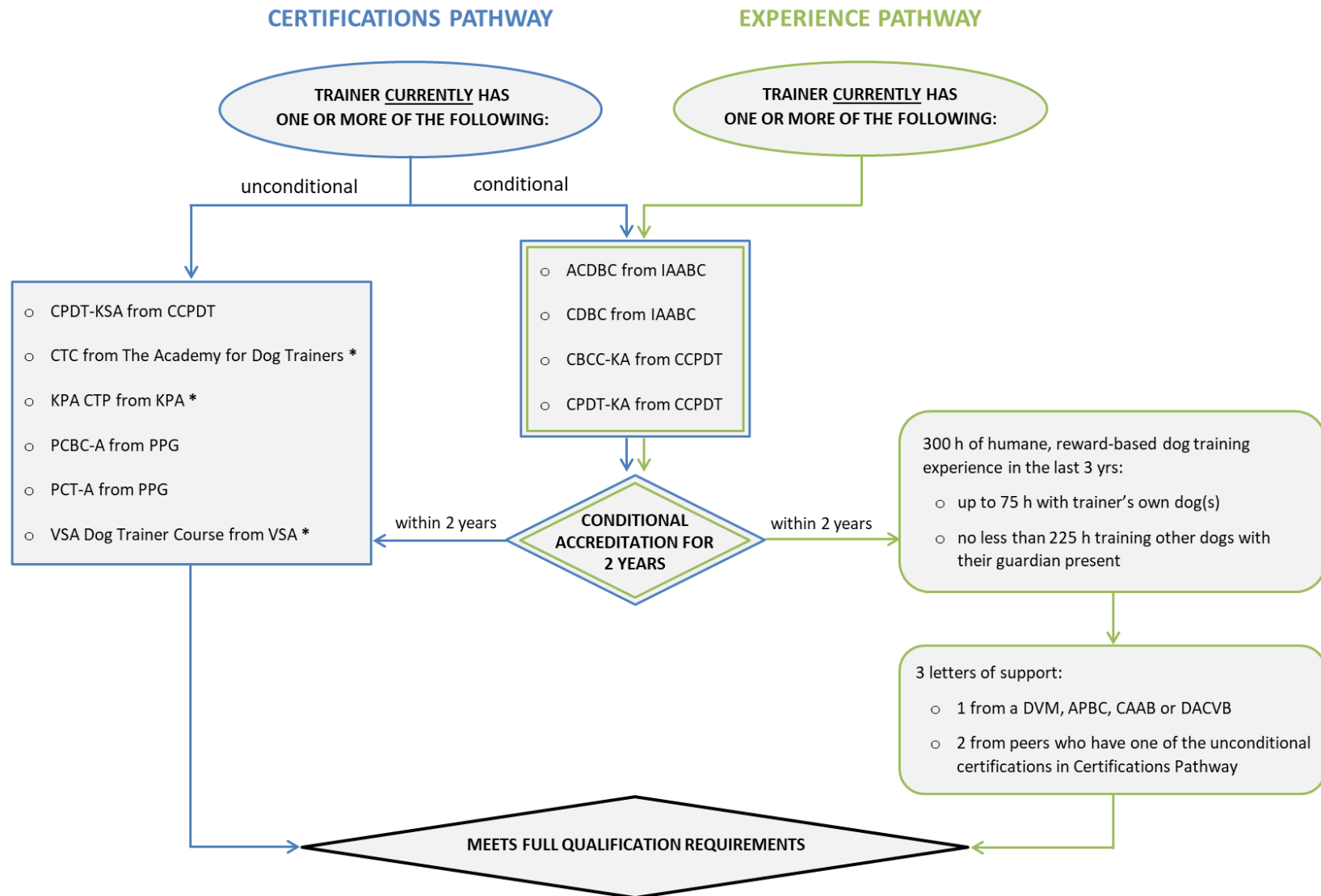
- 5.1. Upon initial AnimalKind accreditation, trainers must meet the pre-requisite qualification requirements outlined in one of the two flowcharts below (depending on the current status of trainers' credentials). In each of the two scenarios, trainers may choose to meet pre-requisite qualification requirements following one of two possible pathways: Certifications Pathway or Experience Pathway.
- 5.2. Trainers must be committed to continued learning. To this end, trainers pursuing initial accreditation: Scenario 2, as well as all trainers pursuing re-accreditation, must complete 30 hours of continuing education every 2 years. Of these 30 hours, at least 20 hours must be documented and up to 10 hours may be self-reported.
- 5.3. "Candidate trainers" who do not yet meet the qualification requirements for trainers (as outlined in standard 5.1) may provide training services for the accredited business independent of direct supervision by an AnimalKind trainer (i.e. alone) for up to 12 months if the candidate trainer:
- a) has completed and passed the assessment for one of the following: Sophomore level of Academy for Dog Trainers, Unit 2 (workshop 2) of Karen Pryor Academy or Trimester 2 of Victoria Stilwell Academy;
  - b) has completed and documented a minimum of 100 hours of assisting reward-based training sessions with clients and their dogs (these hours do not need to be with an AnimalKind trainer);
  - c) has completed and documented a minimum of 30 hours of teaching where the candidate trainer is leading the training session, while under direct supervision and observation (i.e. watching and listening in-person or by interactive live video) of an AnimalKind trainer;
- and the accredited business:
- d) establishes a documented mentor-mentee relationship between the candidate trainer and an AnimalKind qualified trainer in the business;
  - e) notifies AnimalKind of the date that a candidate trainer begins teaching training sessions independently; and
  - f) does not continue to offer candidate trainer's training services beyond the 12 month period, unless the candidate completes an AnimalKind accepted trainer qualification.
- 5.4. Dog "sport trainers" who specialize in training for dog sports (for example, nosework canine scent work and agility) but who do not meet the qualification requirements for AnimalKind trainers (as outlined in standard 5.1), may teach for an AnimalKind accredited business if the sport trainer:
- a) can demonstrate expertise in the sport (i.e. sport-specific trainer certification, competition titles, judging certification);
  - b) can demonstrate experience with reward-based dog training (i.e. continuing education credits, sport-specific trainer certification from a reward-based organization);

- c) have completed a minimum of 30 hours of teaching under the direct supervision and observation (i.e. watching and listening in-person or by interactive live video) of an AnimalKind trainer; and
- d) the sport trainer only teaches the sport in which they are specialized and does not provide other training services for the AnimalKind accredited business

**Table 1: List of abbreviations of certifications, certificates and organizations in the flowcharts below:**

<b>Abbreviations</b>	<b>Full Name</b>
ACDBC from IAABC	Associate Certified Animal Behavior Consultant from International Association of Animal Behaviour Consultants
CDBC from IAABC	Certified Dog Behavior Consultant from IAABC
CBCC-KA from CCPDT	Certified Behavior Consultant Canine from Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers
CPDT-KA from CCPDT	Certified Professional Dog Trainer – Knowledge Assessed from CCPDT
CPDT-KSA from CCPDT	Certified Professional Dog Trainer – Knowledge and Skills Assessed from CCPDT
CTC from The Academy for Dog Trainers	Certificate in Training and Counseling from The Academy for Dog Trainers
KPA CTP from Karen Pryor Academy	Karen Pryor Academy Certified Training Partner from Karen Pryor Academy (Dog Trainer Professional)
PCBC-A from PPG	Professional Canine Behavior Consultant from Pet Professional Guild
PCT-A from PPG	Professional Canine Trainer from PPG
VSA DTC from VSA	Victoria Stilwell Academy Dog Trainer Course from Victoria Stilwell Academy

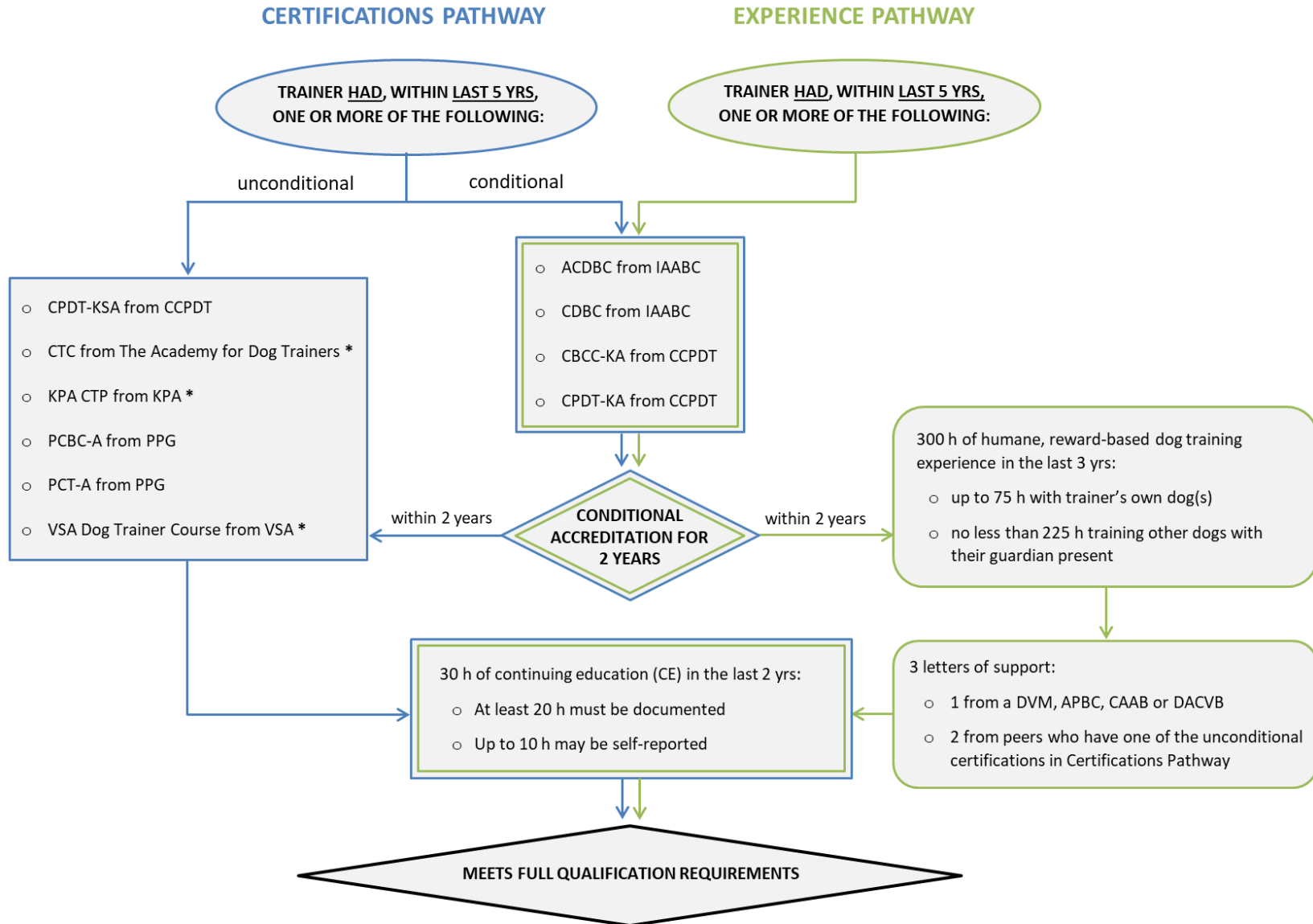
Initial AnimalKind accreditation: Scenario 1



\* Certificates marked with an asterisk (\*) are considered to be current if obtained within the last 5 yrs



## Initial AnimalKind accreditation: Scenario 2



\* Trainers seeking accreditation using one of the certificates marked with an asterisk (\*) must follow the current flowchart (Scenario 2) if the certificate was obtained more than 5 yrs ago

**Additional qualification information:** Trainers must meet qualification requirements outlined in the flowcharts above upon initial AnimalKind accreditation. After meeting qualification requirements, trainers may choose to lapse their other certifications (i.e., once accredited by AnimalKind, maintenance of certifications from other organizations will not be required).

Of the 300 hours of experience in humane, reward-based dog training, up to 75 hours may be with the trainer's own dog(s), and no less than 225 hours must be training other dogs with their guardian present (i.e., teaching dog guardians how to train their dog). Only hours of training as primary trainer (not as an assistant) may count towards those 300 hours. Hours and other relevant information should be documented in a log sheet (see template in Appendix 3; a Word version is available upon request to AnimalKind).

With regards to the two letters of support from peers who possess one of the *unconditional* certificates or certifications in the Certifications Pathway, letters from trainers who work for the same business as the trainer are acceptable.

Continuing education (CE) hours must be in humane, reward-based and evidence-based education. Examples of documented CE hours include events that offer CE credits, such as those approved by the CCPDT or IAABC, or attendance at relevant scientific conferences, symposia or webinars that may not offer CE credits, but where attendance/registration can be verified. If trainers are unsure whether an event that does not offer CE credits is relevant, they may submit information about the event to AnimalKind for consideration. Self-reported CE hours can include discussion of case studies between trainers.

Our intention is that the role of "candidate trainer" is for students who are enrolled in an AnimalKind approved dog training school (currently, The Academy for Dog Trainers, Karen Pryor Academy and Victoria Stilwell Academy) and working in an AnimalKind accredited business under the mentorship of another AnimalKind trainer. This role provides accredited training businesses with more flexibility to hire, mentor and support novice trainers to gain experience in rewards-based training environments. These dog trainer school programs were selected as they only use and teach reward-based training methods, and have student assessment points throughout their programs which students must pass before they are eligible to continue to the next program level

**Assessment of trainer certificates and certifications:** The criteria used to assess certificates and certifications for their inclusion in the program are available in Appendix 4. Possession of the credentials listed as *unconditional* in the Certifications Pathway provides assurance that dog trainers are knowledgeable, experienced and skilled in evidence-based dog training. To obtain CPDT-KSA from CCPDT, or PCBC-A or PCT-A from PPG, dog trainers must pass theoretical examinations demonstrating knowledge of dog behaviour, and practical examinations demonstrating practical training skills. PPG endorses the use of humane, reward-based methods only. Trainers with certification from PPG have been assessed on their skills to train dogs using only humane, reward-based methods.

Karen Pryor Academy (KPA), The Academy for Dog Trainers and Victoria Stilwell Academy (VSA) are dog behaviour and training programs that are known internationally. These programs are advanced, rigorous and comprehensive (taking 6 months [KPA and VSA] or 2 years [The Academy for Dog Trainers] to complete) and rely on an entirely humane, reward-based curriculum. To graduate from these programs, prospective dog trainers must demonstrate that they have in-depth, evidence-based knowledge of dog behaviour, the skills to apply this knowledge effectively and in a humane manner, and the tools to teach dog training classes.

Possession of the credentials listed as *conditional* in the Certifications Pathway provides assurance that trainers are knowledgeable and experienced, but their practical skills have not been assessed. For this

reason, trainers with these qualifications must, within 2 years of AnimalKind accreditation, either obtain one of the *unconditional* certificates or certifications listed in the Certifications Pathway or provide assurance of skills through the Experience Pathway.

IAABC and CCPDT recently released Joint Standards of Practice endorsing the Least Intrusive, Minimally Aversive (LIMA) approach to training. This approach provides a structure of ethical guidelines to avoid undue stress and discomfort, showing trainers how to avoid using aversive methods. Ultimately, however, trainers may resort to the use of aversive-based methods if all other methods have failed. While AnimalKind will accredit trainers certified through IAABC or CCPDT, these trainers are not permitted to use aversive-based methods to train dogs under any circumstances. All AnimalKind accredited trainers must commit to using only humane methods that are reward-based and evidence-based. In our review of the scientific literature <sup>1</sup>, we found no justification for the use of aversive-based methods. Not only are aversive-based methods associated with negative welfare consequences, but they have not been shown to be more effective than reward-based methods.

All AnimalKind accredited trainers must understand dog behaviour and know how to recognize when a dog is anxious, fearful or uncomfortable. Trainers who meet pre-requisite qualification requirements have been assessed for their ability to do so.

#### Standard 6: Trainers do not act beyond their professional qualifications

- 6.1. Trainers must demonstrate an awareness of their own limitations and recognize when to refer cases to another trainer (see 3.6 for conditions), a general practice veterinarian (DVM), a member of the Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors (APBC), a Certified Applied Animal Behaviorist (CAAB), or a Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Behavior (DACVB).
- 6.2. Trainers who are not veterinarians must not perform, offer to perform, or imply that they are entitled to perform, in BC, any act that falls under the purview of veterinary medicine. This includes the diagnosis and treatment of animals for the prevention, alleviation or correction of disease, injury, pain, defect, disorder, or other similar condition <sup>53,54</sup>.
- 6.3. Dog training businesses must not sell or promote non-professional dental scaling services (also known as “cosmetic cleaning of the visible portion of a dog’s teeth”, “above the gum line dental care”, and “anaesthesia-free dentals”)
- 6.4. Dog training businesses that sell and promote food products for dogs (including raw animal protein food products) must not make therapeutic nutritional recommendations.

Trainers are encouraged to suggest to clients that they visit or consult with a veterinarian if they have any concerns about a dog’s health. Therapeutic nutritional recommendations should only be made by veterinarians. Trainers are permitted to suggest a type of food reward to use as a positive reinforcer during training; however, if dogs have any dietary health concerns (e.g., food allergy, diabetes), then a veterinarian should make the food reward recommendation. The BC SPCA discourages the feeding of raw food as the whole diet to dogs due to veterinary and public health concerns associated with these diets.

The BC SPCA does not condone the provision of non-professional dental scaling services due to the potential to induce high levels of stress and fear from animal handling and restraint practices <sup>4</sup> and the health risk to dogs from undiagnosed dental disease. The BC SPCA recommends that guardians obtain advice on their dogs' dental health from a veterinarian.

The College of Veterinarians of British Columbia (CVBC) <sup>53</sup> under the purview of the provincial *Veterinarians Act* <sup>54</sup> prohibits anyone who is not a licensed veterinarian from professing that they have the skills, knowledge or qualifications of veterinary medicine. Unauthorized practice of veterinary medicine poses a risk to the public and to animals. Persons who contravene this prohibition may be prosecuted for an offence under the BC *Veterinarians Act*. Common areas of unauthorized practice without veterinary supervision include acupuncture, alternative practices (reiki, acupressure, traditional Chinese medicine, and homeopathy, including diets), chiropractic, dentistry, massage therapy, nutraceuticals, pharmacy, and physical therapy <sup>53</sup>.

Trainers who have additional specialized skills may provide some veterinary-related services if directed by, and under the authority of, a veterinarian acting in accordance with CVBC bylaws, guidelines, and/or standards.

#### Standard 7: Trainers exhibit a high level of professionalism and ethical behaviour

- 7.1. Trainers must treat clients, co-workers and members of the community with respect and consideration.
- 7.2. Dog training businesses and trainers must:
  - a) inform clients of the name, qualifications and experience of each trainer, candidate trainer and sport trainer who provide services for the accredited business by listing the information on their website, or other written format if there is no business website; and
  - b) provide truthful representations of qualifications and experience in communications to clients (e.g., website, marketing material, informed consent form).
- 7.3. Trainers must not provide guarantees with regards to specific training outcomes.
- 7.4. Trainers must work with clients to establish realistic and humane training and behaviour goals.
- 7.5. Trainers must obtain written informed consent from clients prior to photographing, video or audio recording a dog training session.
- 7.6. Trainers must not disclose identifying information about clients or their dogs to others outside their business without the clients' written informed consent, unless required by law.
- 7.7. Trainers must follow the Standards when training their own dog(s), and any other dogs who are used during training (e.g., target dog for counterconditioning training).

**Standard 8: Assistants are qualified in humane dog handling**

- 8.1. Assistants must only use humane methods that are rewards-based and evidence-based when interacting with dogs.
- 8.2. Assistants must be knowledgeable about dog behaviour and understand and recognize dog body language, particularly fear, stress and aggressive behaviour.
- 8.3. Assistants must be trained on risk management and safe management of dogs to reduce risk of injury to themselves from dogs (e.g., bites, scratches).
- 8.4. Dog training businesses must directly supervise assistants (i.e. watching and listening in-person or by interactive live video) and are responsible for ensuring the welfare of dogs under the assistants' care, including when assistants are leading training sessions to gain training experience as part of a mentorship relationship with an AnimalKind trainer.
- 8.5. The training of an assistant must:
  - a) use Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) (see Appendix 2 for required topics);
  - b) be documented with written records kept for at least 12 months.

**Standard 9: Trainers ensure clients understand the training methods that will be used**

- 9.1. Dog training businesses must inform clients of their AnimalKind accreditation and provide them with the AnimalKind program's website address; this information should be made available in written form to each client (e.g., on business website or intake form).
- 9.2. Trainers must explain to clients in plain language (i.e. avoiding abbreviations or jargon) and ensure clients understand:
  - a) the methods, devices or tools they will use during training; and
  - b) the common side effects of the training methods they will use during training.

**Standard 10: Dogs' emotional well-being is prioritized at all times during training sessions**

- 10.1. Dogs must always have a choice to participate in a training session and a designated space where they can withdraw (e.g., blanket on floor) whenever this is possible (e.g., indoor space, private outdoor space).
- 10.2. The duration of a training session must not continue beyond a dog's:
  - a) willingness to participate; or
  - b) physical limitations.
- 10.3. Trainers must recognize and address undesirable emotional states of each dog during a training session.

Dogs should not be forced to participate in a training session. For example, it is recommended that dogs have a blanket, towel, crate or quiet area where they may choose to retreat to during training in any indoor or private outdoor spaces. When training in public outdoor spaces, such as on the street or at a dog park, or when training on-leash so the dog is not able to physically withdraw from a situation, trainers must monitor dogs for signs of fear, stress, anxiety, avoidance and lack of engagement. Trainers should recognize and address dogs' needs at all times during training.

**Standard 11: Training environments are healthy and safe**

- 11.1. For group training or training in areas frequented by other dogs, trainers must require the following:
- a) for puppies (up to 5 months), written proof that puppies are current on vaccines for distemper and parvovirus;
  - b) for adult dogs, a signed declaration from clients that their adult dogs receive regular veterinary care and are current on vaccines for distemper and parvovirus, or have undergone titre testing found to be adequate under direction of a veterinarian.
- 11.2. Dogs displaying signs of coughing, sneezing, vomiting, diarrhea or lethargy must not be allowed to participate in a training session.
- 11.3. Training environments must not allow access to physical environmental hazards, such as sharp objects or the ingestion or inhalation of noxious materials, such as garbage or cleaning agents.
- 11.4. Air quality (e.g., odour, ventilation) in the training environment must allow dogs and people to breathe comfortably.
- 11.5. Trainers must ensure dogs are offered water during training.
- 11.6. The floor of indoor training premises (except in client's private home) must be cleaned with a cleaning product effective against parvovirus before each puppy class.
- 11.7. Soiled indoor training premises must be cleaned promptly with a cleaning product effective against parvovirus (except in client's private home).
- 11.8. Training areas or training practices (e.g., with fence, leash) must prevent dogs from running away or into hazards (e.g., vehicle or bicycle traffic).
- 11.9. Trainers must take reasonable steps to protect dogs in the training class or the community from dogs showing aggressive behaviours that are participating in a training session, including:
- a) prior to enrolment, trainers must ask clients to disclose whether their dog has a history of biting dogs or people;
  - b) dogs with a bite history or high bite risk must only be allowed to participate in group classes if reasonable environmental management and/or safety equipment would be sufficient to allow safe participation in the class;
  - c) trainers must carefully attend to the emotional state of dogs with a bite history or high bite risk to avoid conflict with other dogs, clients, trainers or assistants during a training session.
- 11.10. The maximum ratio for number of dogs to trainers/assistants (dogs:trainers or assistants) is:
- a) puppies: 6:1;
  - b) adult dogs: 6:1;
  - c) dogs with a bite history or high bite risk: 3:1.

These ratios describe maximum enrollment limits. However – on occasion – the ratio may be exceeded to accommodate a dog attending a make-up class after having missed his or her regular scheduled lesson.

**Standard 12: Acts of cruelty and neglect are not tolerated**

12.1. Acts of cruelty must not occur, including, but not limited to:

- a) causing injury to an animal using a prohibited training method, device or tool;
- b) hitting or beating of an animal.

12.2. Acts of neglect must not occur, including, but not limited to:

- a) failure to prevent dehydration during training;
- b) continuing to train a dog who requires immediate veterinary attention;
- c) training, transport or holding of animals in environments or vehicles that are too hot or too cold.

This standard does not apply in an emergency situation where a person or animal is in danger of injury or death (e.g., dog attacking or being attacked, dog running into traffic).



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## Appendix 1 – Definitions

**Animal welfare:** An animal's quality of life. An animal's welfare depends upon both his/her physical health and affective state. Animals experience good welfare when they are able to experience positive feelings arising from pleasurable activities and the fulfillment of behavioural needs, and when they are free from poor physical health and negative feelings (e.g., pain, discomfort, hunger, fear, frustration).

**Anxiety:** A negative emotion experienced in response to a perceived potential threat. Animals experience anxiety most often in new and unfamiliar situations and respond by heightening their vigilance in order to assess the potential for danger. Anxiety differs from fear in that it is anticipatory, and may or may not have an identifiable stimulus.

**Assistant:** An individual who is working alongside and/or under the direct supervision of a trainer to assist with dog management during training lessons. This includes providing feedback to clients, handling dogs, and cleaning.

**Audit:** An audit is a planned and documented activity performed by qualified personnel to determine by investigation, examination, or evaluation of objective evidence, the adequacy and compliance with established procedures, or applicable documents, and the effectiveness of implementation.

**Aversive-based training:** Any training method, device or tool that the dog perceives as physically or emotionally uncomfortable.

**Client:** An individual who hires the services of a dog training business to help train a dog in their care. A client is often the guardian (legal owner) of the dog in training but may not be.

**Distress:** A severe negative affective state caused by physical and/or psychological factors. Physical distress may arise when an animal is hungry, thirsty, too hot, too cold, diseased, injured or in pain to an elevated degree. Psychological distress may arise when an animal experiences fear, anxiety, frustration, or depression to an elevated degree.

**Dog:** Domestic dogs of all ages in the species *Canis familiaris*.

**Dog training:** Actions undertaken to manage or modify a dog's behaviour at all ages, including activities aimed at socializing dogs, teaching dogs to perform desired behaviours and inhibit undesired behaviours, and preventing the development of problem behaviours. Dog training also refers to teaching guardians about normal dog behaviour, dog communication and dog body language, and teaching guardians how to humanely manage or modify their dog's behaviour.

**Dog training businesses:** Individuals, organizations or businesses that provide dog training.

**Evidence-based methods:** Training methods that are informed by objective evidence, including data and peer-reviewed scientific literature.

**Fear:** A negative emotion experienced in response to a perceived real and immediate threat, usually accompanied by a physiological stress response. Unlike anxiety, fear always has an identifiable stimulus.

**Guardian:** A person who or an organization that is primarily responsible for the welfare, care and management of an animal.

**Humane:** Promoting good welfare and minimizing suffering.

**Humane training:** Training or caring for an animal without using pain, fear, physical or verbal intimidation techniques.

**Reward-based training:** Any training technique, tool or device that the dog does not perceive as physically or emotionally uncomfortable.

**Socialization:** Providing dogs – during the critical socialization period – with positive experiences with many different environments, animals, persons and objects they are likely to encounter in their daily lives. This includes, but is not limited to, different sights, sounds, smells, surfaces; dogs of various breeds, sizes and temperaments; people of various ages, heights and mannerisms; and objects such as umbrellas, hats, cars, bicycles and skateboards.

**Standard Operating Procedure (SOP):** Established or prescribed methods to be followed routinely for the performance of a designated operation or in designated situations.

**Stress:** The physiological response to a stimulus in order to help an animal cope with his/her environment. The stress response can be associated with either positive emotions (e.g., excitement, arousal) or negative emotions (e.g., anxiety, frustration), depending upon the nature of the stimulus or the animal's perception of that stimulus. Chronic stress is detrimental to an animal's health and welfare.

**Trainer:** An individual who performs dog training.

**Training outcome:** The positive or negative consequence of a training approach.

**Welfare:** see **Animal Welfare**.

**Wellbeing:** Generally used to denote good welfare.

## Appendix 2 – Standard Operating Procedure Required Topics

**Standard 1.4.** Dog training businesses must have a written animal welfare policy and/or mission statement to communicate expectations to trainers and training assistants regarding animal care and handling.

The following elements must be included in the policy and/or mission statement (a template is available from AnimalKind upon request):

- a statement that only humane methods that are reward-based and evidence-based are used;
- the business is committed to protecting the welfare of dogs;
- dogs are handled and treated with respect;
- employees report observations or information related to animal mistreatment by another employee;
- name of person responsible for responding to allegations of employee mistreatment of animals.

**Standard 8.5.** The training of an assistant must: a) use Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

The following elements must be included in the SOP:

Relevant Standard	SOP Topics
1.4 & 1.5	Informing about animal welfare policy/mission statement
8.1	Using humane, evidence-based methods when interacting with dogs
8.2	Knowledgeable about dog behaviour and recognize dog body language, particularly fear, stress and aggressive behaviour
8.3	Risk management and safe management of dogs to reduce risk of injury
11.7	Cleaning training premises

## Appendix 3 – Template Log Sheet for Recording Training Experience

The log must report at least 300 hours in humane, reward-based and evidence-based dog training as primary trainer (not assistant) in the last 3 yrs

Trainer name:					
Date (mm/yyyy)	Name of business or Name of client (if private)	Type of training (e.g., basic manners, agility)	Contact person who can confirm hours (name & email or phone number)	Number of hours training:	
				own dog	dogs with their guardian present
Subtotal hours:					
Grand total hours:					



## Appendix 4 –Assessment Criteria for Trainer Certificates and Certifications

To be included in the qualification requirements, the certificate or certification will meet the following criteria:

ALL CERTIFICATES AND CERTIFICATIONS		
ADMINISTRATION		
<i>The certifying organization will:</i>		
Be a legally registered, externally accountable organization		
Have a mechanism of oversight/review of its curriculum to ensure it is up-to-date with evolving science (e.g., advisory body, staff experts, external review procedure)		
Show evidence of third-party endorsements of qualification (e.g., partnerships, accrediting body, CEUs)		
CONTENT/TOPICS COVERED		
<i>The certificate or certification will:</i>		
Require graduates/members to abide by a training philosophy aligned with humane & evidence-based practices including avoiding the use of aversive training methods		
Evaluate trainers on the use of evidence-based training methods		
Evaluate trainers on the use of reward-based training methods		
Evaluate trainers on their knowledge of harms that aversive training methods can cause		
Evaluate trainers on their knowledge of dog body language and behaviour		
Evaluate trainers on their understanding of the limitations of their expertise		
Evaluate trainers on their ability to teach people (i.e., dog guardians)		
Evaluate trainers on their knowledge of when to consult with or refer to a veterinarian		
CERTIFICATES (FROM SCHOOLS)		
<i>The school provides:</i>		
Education and instruction in the use of humane, reward-based training methods only		
Transparency about the instructors who teach or mentor students		
A timeline for completion of course-work and practical training		
Theoretical course education		
Practical (skills) education	Yes: unconditional	No: conditional
CERTIFICATIONS (FROM MEMBERSHIP ORGANIZATIONS)		
<i>The certification requires candidates to:</i>		
Provide references from veterinarians or other dog trainers		
Have completed a specified number of hours in dog training		
Complete a written exam of theoretical knowledge		
Complete a practical (skills) exam	Yes: unconditional	No: conditional